

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SANTO DOMINGO 2487

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, DR
SUBJECT: OVERVIEW ONE WEEK BEFORE MAY 16 ELECTION

REF SANTO DOMINGO 2437

SUMMARY. AS PRESIDENT BALAGUER CONTINUES HIS SURPRISINGLY
ENERGETIC PERSONAL CAMPAIGN, HIS PARTY APPARATUS, RIVEN FOR THE
PAST SEVEN WEEKS BY IN-FIGHTING, HAS FINALLY GONE INTO ACTION.
THE PRD CONTINUES TO RALLY IMPRESSIVE CROWDS AND ITS NATIONAL
LEADERS ARE PLANNING THE LAST BIG EFFORT THIS WEEKEND IN THE
CAPITAL. JUAN BOSCH, UP TO THIS POINT AN INVISIBLE CANDIDATE,
SEEMS TO BE GOING PUBLIC IN AN ATTEMPT TO DAMAGE THE PRD.
PEOPLE NATURALLY ARE MORE NERVOUS THAN PREVIOUSLY, BUT,
WITH ONLY ONE WEEKEND INCIDENT OF ANY IMPORTANCE, THE ELECTORAL
PEACE APPEARS TO BE HOLDING. END SUMMARY

I. THE ELECTORAL BATTLE

1. THE POLITICAL COGNOSCENTI HERE SPENT THE WEEKEND PONDERING
THE WORKING OF PRESIDENT BALAGUER'S COMPLEX MIND WHICH PRODUCED
MAY 5 SWITCH OF VICE PRESIDENT GOICO MORALES FOR FERNANDO ALVAREZ
BOGAERT AS BALAGUER'S RUNNING MATE (REFTEL.) MOST PREVALENT
THEORIES WERE THAT BALAGUER WAS TAKING HIS VENGEANCE AGAINST
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ALVAREZ FOR SOME EARLIER GRIEVANCE; OR THAT BALAGUER REALLY HAD
WANTED TO MODERNIZE HIS GOVERNMENT BUT HAD MISJUDGED THE SITUATION
AND UNDER-ESTIMATED THE CONTROVERSY ALVAREZ' SELECTION WOULD
STIR UP.

2. BALAGUER HIMSELF, SPENT HIS WEEKEND HOP-SCOTCHING BY
HELICOPTER AROUND THE WESTERN PROVINCES, APPEARING BEFORE FOUR

AND FIVE CROWDS A DAY WITH ALL MANNER OF REELECTION PROMISES, AS THOUGH NOTHING OUT OF THE ORDINARY HAD TAKEN PLACE ON FRIDAY. HE NEVER HAS MENTIONED THE NAME OF "FERNANDITO" ALVAREZ.

3. THE SOLUTION OF THE ALVAREZ "CRISIS" SEEMS TO HAVE GALVANIZED ELEMENTS OF THE REFORMISTA ELECTORAL APPARATUS WHICH HAD BEEN SITTING ON ITS HANDS SINCE THE MARCH 14 NOMINATION OF THE PARTY TICKET. AT THE MOMENT ALVAREZ' CANDIDACY WAS BEING TERMINATED, BALAGUER WAS FIELDING A NEW TEAM OF CAMPAIGN MANAGERS TO PRODUCE VICTORY IN THE LAST DAYS OF THE CAMPAIGN. EXCEPT FOR HIS OWN PRODIGIOUS STUMP EFFORTS AND THOSE OF HIS SISTER EMMA, WHO IS ON THE STREETS EVERY DAY CAMPAIGNING JOINTLY FOR THE MAYOR'S SEAT AND HER BROTHER'S FOURTH TERM IN THE NATIONAL PALACE, THE PARTY ITSELF SEEMED PARALYZED IN THE SILENT STRUGGLE OF CHIEF OF NATIONAL POLICE MGEN NEIT NIVAR AND HIS ASSOCIATES AGAINST ALVAREZ.

4. ONCE THE TRUSTED AND NEUTRAL FACE OF GOICO WAS PUT BACK ON THE REFORMISTA TICKET, THE PARTY SEEMED READY TO FACE ITS PRD ADVERSARY. SO INTENSE HAD BEEN THE INTERNAL STRUGGLE THAT THE PRD'S APPARENT GAINS IN KEY DISTRICTS HAD BEEN GIVEN ONLY SECONDARY ATTENTION. A BURST OF ACTIVITY FRIDAY SHOWED THE REFORMISTAS WERE BEGINNING TO DEPLOY THEIR PEOPLE AND MONEY FOR A BLITZ FINISH.

5. FIRST PRIORITY WAS THE POPULOUS CIBAO VALLEY, WHERE A
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SUCCESSION OF BALAGUER CAMPAIGN "MANAGERS" CLEARLY HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO THOLD THE PRESIDENT'S FORMERLY STRONG POSITION, INCLUDING ALVAREZ AND ATTORNEY GENERAL LUNA MORALES, FORMER MAYOR OF SANTIAGO AND A SENATOR FOR THAT PROVINCE. AFTER PRD STRENGTH IN THE CIBAO WAS MADE PALPABLE BY THE PARTY'S BIG RALLY OF APRIL 30 IN SANTIAGO, THE PRESIDENT (ON THE DAY HE DUMPED ALVAREZ) REPLACED LUNA WITH SOCRATES (CHINO) PICHARDO, CURRENT SENATOR FROM SANTIAGO AND UNSUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE FOR THE REFORMISTA VP NOMINATION, AS THE NEW MANAGER OF THE CIBAO.

6. PICHARDO, 20 YEARS AGO A HUMBLE MECHANIC AND TODAY, AFTER A QUESTIONABLE CAREER AS POLITICIAN-BUSINESSMAN, A MULTI-MILLIONAIRE, HAD 10 DAYS TO WHIPSTITCH BACK TOGETHER BALAGUER'S ONCE POWERFUL POLITICAL MACHINE IN THE NORTH.

7. PICHARDO SAYS HIS FIRST ACT WILL BE TO ORGANIZE A SANTIAGO RALLY OF 300,000 REFORMISTAS FOR SATURDAY, THE 13TH, WHICH HE ADDED, WILL SHOW UP THE OPPOSITION AS TRAILING BADLY IN THE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SANTO DOMINGO 2487

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT)

CIBAO. TALK OF SUCH GRAND SPECTACLES AT THIS LATE DATE MAY BE UNFORTUNATE FROM THE REFORMISTA VIEWPOINT. FOR ONE THING, IT IMPLICITLY CREDITS THE PATENTLY EXAGGERATED CLAIMS OF THE PRD THAT ITS APRIL 30 AFFAIR BROUGHT 200,000 SUPPORTERS INTO SANTIAGO'S OLYMPIC STADIUM PLAZA; SECONDLY, GIVEN THE DIVISIONS WITHIN REFORMISTA RANKS, CHINO MAY NOT BE ABLE TO ORGANIZE SUCH AN EXTRAVAGANZA IN SEVEN DAYS' TIME. IF HE FAILS AT THE FINAL MOMENT, BALAGUER WILL SUFFER ANOTHER PSYCHOLOGICAL BLOW.

8. MANY WILL BE WATCHING THE CIBAO FOR NEW TACTICS OF ANOTHER KIND. PICHARDO HAS THE REPUTATION NOT WHOLLY UNFOUNDED OF BEING A POLITICAL ROUGHNECK. ADD TO THIS THE UNANNOUNCED APPEARANCE OVER THE WEEKEND IN THE CIBAO OF POLICE CHIEF NIVAR. HE MET WITH MILITARY/POLICE BIG GUNS FROM VARIOUS CITIES IN THE REGION, OSTENSIBLY FOR A LAST-MINUTE CHECK OF STEPS TO BE TAKEN TO MAINTAIN PUBLIC ORDER IN THE LAST DAYS OF THE CAMPAIGN. HE ALSO MET, HOWEVER, WITH BALAGUER'S FORMER VICH PRESIDENT AND NOW OPPOSITIONIST AUGUSTO LORA IN WHAT LORA DESCRIBED AS MERELY A "MEETING OF OLD FRIENDS," AND REPORTEDLY SAW OTHER POLITICIANS OF BOTH THE PR AND THE OPPOSITION.

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9. A REFORMISTA RESORT TO STRONG-ARM TACTICS IN THE CIBAO WOULD CONFIRM PRD WARNINGS THAT "REACTIONARY" FOLLOWERS OF BALAGUER, IF NOT NECESSARILY THE PRESIDENT HIMSELF, AR

PREPARING THEMSELVES TO HOLD ON TO POWER BY FAIR MEANS OR FOUL. PRD SEC GEN PENA GOMEZ' NOW DAILY RADIO BROADCASTS URGE THE PARTY FAITHFUL TO BE ON THE ALERT TO AVOID PROVOKING TROUBLE OR TO ALLOW THEMSELVES TO BE PROVOKED. IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE HE WARNS DARKLY ABOUT POSSIBLY VIOLENT EVENTS THIS WEEK.

10. ACTIVITY BY OTHER PARTIES HAS BEEN SPOTTY. PRD PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE ANTONIO GUZMAN GOT A RESPECTABLE TURN-OUT OF SOME 2,000 PROFESSIONALS AT SUNDAY BRUNCH ORGANIZED BY PRD LAWYERS, DOCTORS, ETC.; HIS MESSAGE WAS THAT A PRD VICTORY WILL NOT MEAN A CLEAN SWEEP OF THE CIVIL SERVICE, BUT RATHER THAT A PRD GOVERNMENT WOULD CREATE A CAREER SYSTEM. HIS ASSOCIATES IN THE PARTY WERE SAID TO BE BUSY ORGANIZING SUNDAY'S GRAND FINALE IN SANTO DOMINGO. JUAN BOSCH, MEANTIME, SUDDENLY BEGAN TRAVELING OUTSIDE THE CAPITAL AND GETTING HIS ANTI PUBLIC STATEMENTS INTO PRINT AND ON THE AIR. HIS CRYPTIC MESSAGE. "THE PRD WILL NOT COME TO POWER...BALAGUER WILL CONTINUE IN OFFICE, BUT NOTE CAREFULLY I AM NOT SAYING HE WILL WIN THE ELECTION...DON'T CONFUSE ONE THING WITH THE OTHER." THE UNITED OPPOSITION OF LORA CONTINUED TO LOOK QUITE DISUNITED AND SEEMS TO BE FADING IN THE STRETCH.

II. THE ELECTORAL CLIMATE

11. A CONFUSED ROCK-THROWING AND SHOOTING INCIDENT OCCURRED IN SAN FRANCISCO DE MACORIS ON SUNDAY WITH FOUR INDIVIDUALS SUFFERING LIGHT INJURIES AND AS MANY AS 100 PEOPLE JAILED IN THE AFTERMATH. MOST ACCOUNTS HOLD THAT POLICE AND/OR MILITARY SHOT INTO A PRD DEMONSTRATION. POLICE AUTHORITY-CONFIDENTIAL

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TIES SAY SOMEBODY IN THE CROWD SHOT FIRST. A JOINT MILITARY/POLICE COMMISSION IS INVESTIGATING.

12. ON THE OTHER HAND, PRD PRESIDENT JORGE BLANCO MET YESTERDAY WITH POLICE CHIEF NIVAR FOR "FRUITFUL AND ADVANTAGEOUS" DISCUSSION OF THE ARREST OF SOME 300 PRD LEADERS AND ACTIVISTS IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE COUNTRY, INCLUDING 107 DETAINED IN SUNDAY'S AFFAIR IN SAN FRANCISCO DE MACORIS. NIVAR ORDERED THE RELEASE OF AN UNSTIPULATED NUMBER OF PRD DETAINEES AND CALLED A HALT TO THE SEARCH FOR SEVERAL OTHERS WHO HAVE BEEN SOUGHT BUT HAVE EVADED ARREST. THE SELF-STYLED "POLITICAL PRISONERS" IN LA VICTORIA PRISON ARE ON ANOTHER HUNGER STRIKE, BUT THE AUTHORITIES SAY THIS ONE IS DESIGNED TO HAVE SOME SORT OF ANTI-GOVERNMENT REPERCUSSION ON THE ELECTORAL PROCESS.

13. WITH THE PRD'S FOREBODINGS ABOUT MASSIVE FRAUD, POSSIBLE 11TH-HOUR ARREST OF OPPOSITION LEADERS AND WORSE, TENSIONS

ARE RISING AS TIME GOES ON. THE ELECTORAL PEACE THAT HAS MARKED
THE CAMPAIGN TO DATE MAY BE TESTED IN THE DAYS
REMAINING TO MAY 16.
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